

Nutrient

Important Facts

Food Sources



Energy

Vital for growth and development.

Choose starchy carbohydrates instead of food high in fat and sugar.



Carbohydrate

There are two types - carbohydrate starches and sugars. Starchy carbohydrates should provide the main source of energy in the diet and form the main part of the meal.

Bread, rice, pasta, noodles, potatoes, yams, oats, couscous, breakfast cereals, wheat grains, lentils, red kidney beans, and black eye beans.



Non-Milk Extrinsic Sugars

Food and drink high in NME sugars often provide calories but few other essential nutrients. A diet high in NME sugars contributes to tooth decay.

Table sugar, jam, honey, sweetened drinks, cakes, pastries, ice cream, sweets, biscuits, confectionary, and chocolate.



Fat

Fat is a concentrated source of energy and provides essential fatty acids. High fat intake can lead to excess energy intake and weight gain.

Butter, lard, margarine, fat spreads, oils and dressings such as mayonnaise, chips and other deep fried food, potato waffles, garlic bread, pastries, cakes, biscuits, creamy puddings, meat, and meat products such as pasties.



Saturated Fat

There are two types of fat - saturated fat (mainly from animals) and unsaturated fat (mainly from plants and fish). A diet high in saturated fat can cause high cholesterol levels and increase the risk of diseases such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

For sources of saturated fat see above. Choose lower fat dairy products - skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low fat yoghurt and reduced fat cheese. Use lean cuts of red meat and remove the skin from chicken. For cooking, use an unsaturated vegetable oil such as rapeseed or olive oil. Avoid adding butter or oil to food (i.e. vegetables) after cooking.



Protein

Important for the growth and repair of body tissue like muscles. Children are growing fast so protein is particularly important for them.

Meat, fish, milk, cheese, eggs, yoghurt, nuts and seeds, red kidney beans, lentils, meat alternatives such as tofu, chickpeas, and cereals.



Fibre

Essential for a healthy digestive system. It assists bowel function and prevents problems such as constipation.

Brown rice, oats, wholegrain cereals, muesli, potatoes with skins, wholemeal pasta, wholemeal bread, bulgur wheat, lentils, chick peas, red kidney beans, fruit and vegetables.



**Sodium
(a component of Salt)**

Salt is needed to maintain fluid balance in the body for nerve and muscle function. Too much salt can cause high blood pressure, which may lead to conditions such as stroke, heart disease and kidney problems. Most salt consumed is contained within processed food. Limit the amount of salt added during cooking and instead flavour with herbs and spices.

Ready made soups and sauces, gravy, processed food, some breakfast cereals, salty snacks (e.g. Crisps and salted nuts) bacon, ham, sausages, pizza, cheese and condiments.



Vitamin A

Important for growth and tissue repair, good eyesight and the immune system.

Oily fish, eggs, liver, cheese, butter and milk. Yellow, orange and red coloured fruit and vegetables such as carrots, peppers, apricots, oranges, papaya, mango, butternut squash, sweet potato and tomatoes. Dark leafy vegetables.



Vitamin C

Needed for wound healing and the structure of blood vessels and skin. It helps protect the body from infections and disease and enhances iron absorption.

Fruits - especially citrus fruit (oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit), and berries. Vegetables, especially broccoli, green and red peppers, and sweet potatoes.



Calcium

Essential for strong bones and teeth, especially during childhood and adolescence when the skeleton is growing. It is also important for muscle and nerve function as well as blood clotting.

Milk, cheese, yoghurt, canned fish with bones (e.g. salmon or pilchards), broccoli, cabbage, dried fruits, tofu, red kidney beans, chickpeas, and soya beans.



Folate

Essential for blood cells, the nervous system and helps prevent anaemia.

Liver, yeast extract, orange juice, green leafy vegetables (e.g. spinach), green beans, beetroot, chickpeas, black eye beans, broccoli, peas, and brown rice.



Iron

Needed for the production of the red blood cells which carry oxygen around the body. Iron also plays an important role in maintaining a healthy immune system.

Red meat, offal (especially liver and kidney), canned fish, eggs, dark green leafy vegetables, peas, wholegrains (e.g. brown rice), nuts and seeds, red kidney beans, black eye beans, lentils, chickpeas, dried apricots, and raisins.



Zinc

Zinc is used by the body and has a number of important functions, including growth and tissue repair, wound healing and the immune system.

Red meat, offal, eggs, fish, milk and other dairy products, cereals, red kidney beans, soya products, lentils, chickpeas, and nuts.